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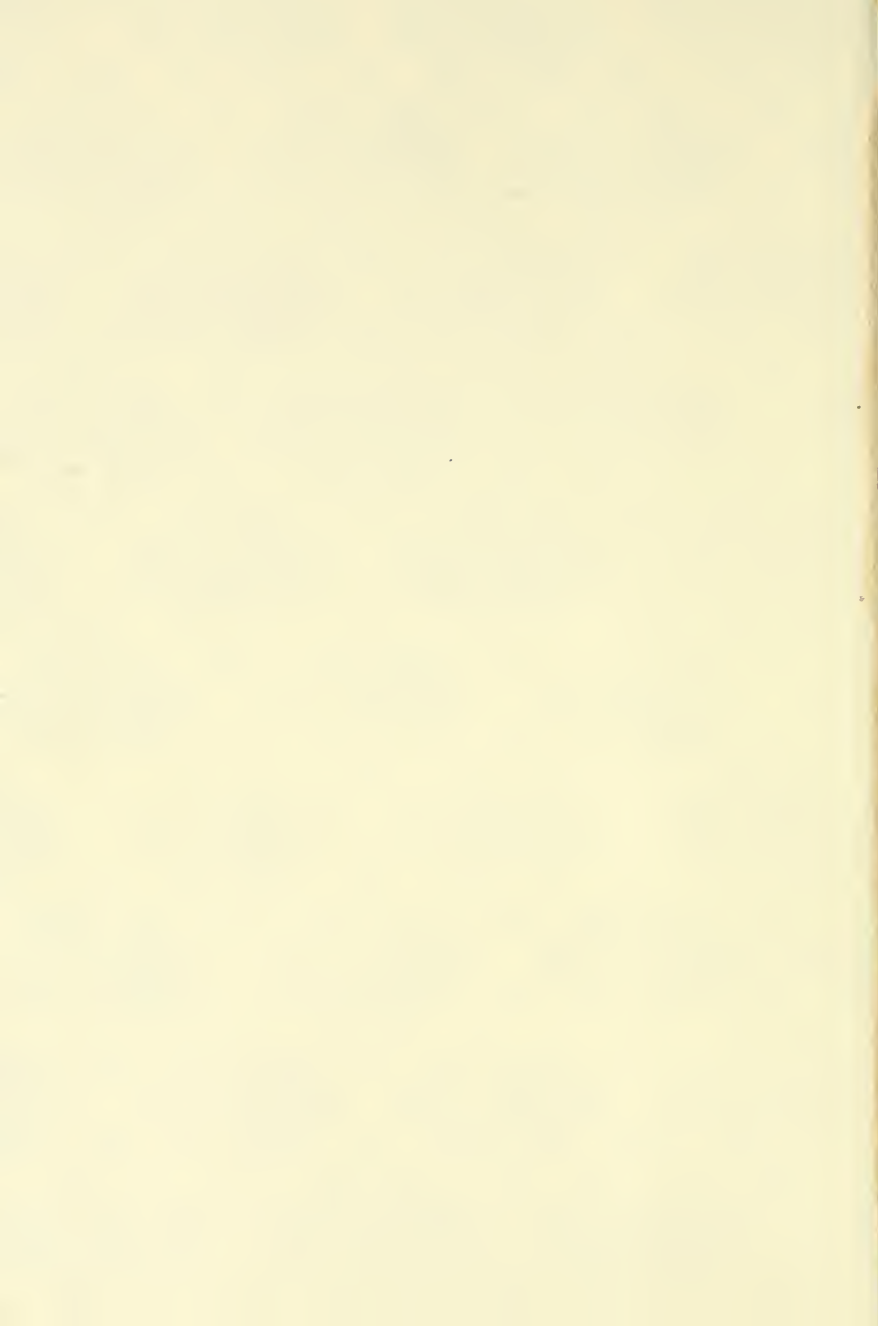
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# The DISCOVERY AMERICA



A PAGEANT  
by  
"Thos F Coakley D.D."  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY  
J Woodman Thompson."

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THOMAS F. COAKLEY

NO. 75

DEC 10 1917

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## INTRODUCTION

American poets who have the historical sense are learning that the history of their nation offers them a wealth of romantic and noble incident, most suitable for poetic treatment. America is a splendid idealistic adventure, to be chronicled not by pedants, but by poets. To the Catholic poet especially the history of our nation is an inviting theme, for the Church plays a glorious part in American development.

Father Coakley has taken a magnificent theme, and treated it with appropriate dignity and enthusiasm. No one can read it without a new and strong realization of the bond between America and the Catholic Church. He makes that gallant gentleman, Columbus, very human; he makes us see also that Kings and Queens can be genuinely regal.

I am glad that he has written this Pageant, and that it is to be produced at this time, when the Cross and the Flag are going out to victory together.

JOYCE KILMER.

*Mineola, New York,  
September, 1917.*





## DESCRIPTION OF THE PAGEANT

The Pageant opens with a Prologue by a Herald, giving a brief summary of the reason for the production.

It is divided into three episodes, the first and second occurring early in 1492. The first episode opens with the low sound of the monks in the Monastery of La Rábida singing the "Magnificat." Just as they reach the verse "He hath filled the hungry with good things," Columbus and his little son Diego enter, listening sorrowfully to the hymn, the words of which make them think of their own hunger. They rest awhile outside the beautiful Monastery. The music ceases, and a dialogue takes place between Columbus and Diego, the homesick little boy wishing his father to return to Italy, since no one takes any interest in his project. Columbus resolutely assures his son that he has prayed too long to think of failure, and that heaven will come to their rescue. Their conversation is interrupted by a crowd of peasants, arrayed in a riot of bril-

liant Spanish color. They begin to taunt Columbus, and to mock him. The music of the monks is again heard, chanting a glorious old recessional hymn, causing the mob to disperse, and as they leave, a priest, Father Juan Perez, comes out, having been attracted by the shouts of the crowd. Columbus asks him for food and shelter. During their talk, the priest becomes much interested in the plans of Columbus, and the first episode ends with the monks giving the pilgrims shelter in the monastery.

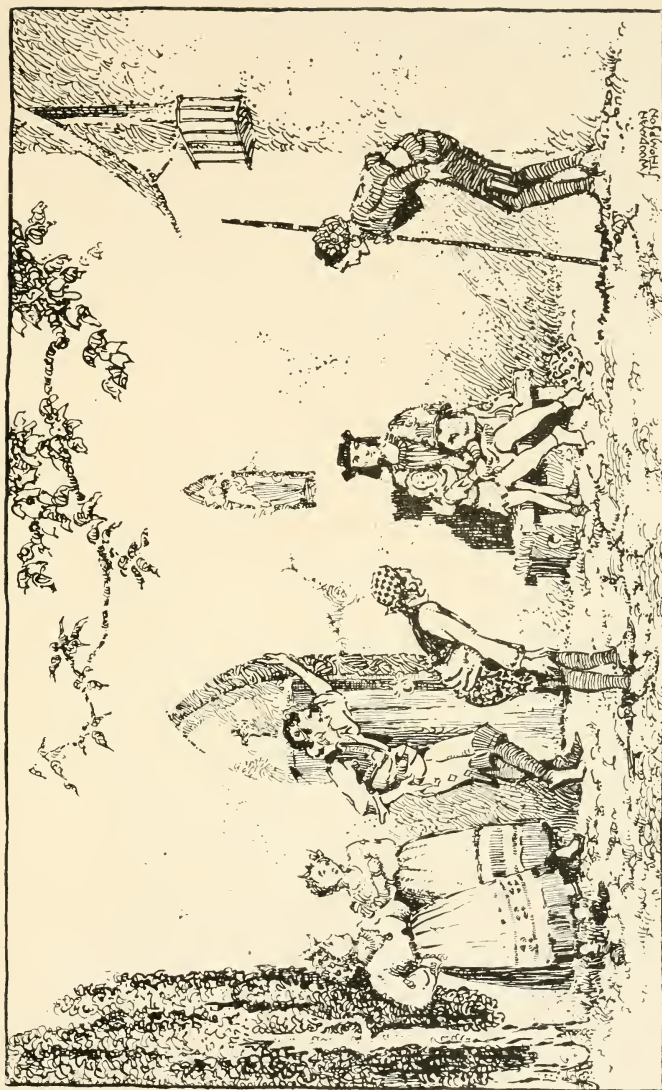
The second episode is a court scene, which takes place at Santa Fe. Father Perez having tested the plans of Columbus, hurries off to Queen Isabella. The Queen becomes enthused over the affair and promises her aid, when suddenly the King is announced. The Queen deems it proper to discuss the matter with her royal spouse before making a grant of money. Father Perez asks for an audience for Columbus, which the King reluctantly grants. Upon being introduced Columbus tells the Court his threefold object, namely, to find a shorter route to India, and thereby gain so much gold that a Crusading Army could be raised to liberate the Holy Land from the Turks; secondly, to propagate the Gospel among the heathens, and, thirdly, to live up to his sainted name, Christopher, which means,

"Christ-bearer." Columbus shows the King an Irish map, with the land he desires to re-discover plainly marked "St. Brendan's Land," it having been discovered by Irish sailors centuries before. The King's sympathy is aroused; he would like to give money for the project, but Spain is without sufficient funds, whereupon Queen Isabella promises to give her crown jewels to the holy cause. This is objected to by the King, and as a disagreement seems imminent between the royal couple, Cardinal Gonzalez de Mendoza rises to say that since the objects of Columbus are purely religious and missionary, it properly belongs to the Catholic Church to finance the undertaking. The Cardinal then summons Luis de Santangel, the Church treasurer, to turn over to Columbus the cost of the expedition, 17,000 golden ducats.

The third episode shows the landing at San Salvador, on Friday, October 12, 1492, and the triumphant possession of the new world.

*Persons of the Pageant*

HERALD  
COLUMBUS  
DIEGO, *his son*  
FATHER JUAN PEREZ  
ANOTHER PRIEST  
QUEEN ISABELLA  
KING FERDINAND  
CARDINAL GONZALEZ DE MENDOZA  
LUIS DE SANTANGEL  
PEASANTS  
FIVE COURT LADIES  
FOUR COURT GENTLEMEN  
TWO PAGES  
CARDINAL'S TWO ATTENDANTS  
SAILORS  
CHORUS



WOODMAN  
THOMPSON

"He shall be as one mocked and spit upon"



## FIRST EPISODE

*The auditorium should be fully illuminated. A gong rings, the curtains part a few inches to allow a HERALD, preferably a small boy, to step out. He speaks slowly and deliberately the*

### PROLOGUE

Kind sirs ; to honor him whose genius  
Has made a mighty nation out of  
These ancient primal wastes, we are tonight  
Assembled. 'Tis four-hundred-twenty-five  
Long years ago since first he trod upon  
Our soil. In simple narrative we strive  
To set attested facts of history,  
So long obscured, before your own good selves ;  
To purge them from all legendary lore ;  
To place in bold relief truth unadorned ;  
To speak a word of gratitude to those  
Who in unjust oblivion have lain ;  
To tell what impulse sent Columbus here ;  
What trials he had, what obstacles ; and when  
His altruistic soul was well nigh crushed  
A priest he met, Perez by name, who made

Him welcome at the court of Isabel.  
And she to regal heights arose, and would  
Have given all her jewels unto him,  
Had not a Prince of Holy Church declared  
There was no need of such a sacrifice.  
Whereat, he gave the pious funds of Spain  
To be expended in his sacred cause.  
And when you go back to your homes, recall  
That love of this, our country, means a love  
Unquenchable of that true Catholic Faith  
That helped Columbus by a generous gift,  
Enabling him to guess the secret of  
The ages, and discover a new world.

*(At the end of the Prologue, the HERALD bows and retires backwards through the parted curtains. The auditorium lights should then be extinguished. A choir of men, concealed some distance away, should begin softly the "Magnificat." As the first verse finishes the curtains part, showing a high Monastery wall. At extreme right, a shadowy Gothic portal, giving entrance to the monastery. Over the doorway a Crucifix. There is a Byzantine image of the Madonna in a small Gothic niche in the wall on the left, before which a small ruby glass should be placed, with a very small candle (not lighted). Beneath the Madonna is a wooden seat, without a back. The*



*lights should be soft and low, as the time is after sunset. As the choir reaches the second verse of the "Magnificat" a monk, in Franciscan habit with a cowl over his head, should enter Left, holding a long, lighted taper, shielded by his hand, to produce shadows. He should walk slowly to the niche containing the Madonna, bow reverently, light the candle, bow reverently again, and pass out through the Gothic portal at the Right, into the Monastery. When the choir reaches the verse "Esurientes implevit bonis," enter on Right COLUMBUS and his son, DIEGO, the latter a boy about twelve years of age. COLUMBUS carries a long pilgrim staff, and DIEGO carries two rolls of maps. The music should continue softly not more than one verse of the "Magnificat" after they enter. COLUMBUS and DIEGO should listen to the dying strains of the hymn.)*

DIEGO

My Father, let us stop awhile. My eyes  
Are heavy, and that last great hill has made  
Me faint for food and drink. I cannot walk!

COLUMBUS

Dear lad, indeed, I have not dared to think  
Of my great weariness. But let us rest.

Here is a great stone bench. Sit down, my son.  
The holy Monks within may give us alms  
And then, lad, on! until we reach the King.  
(COLUMBUS *sits on bench*. DIEGO *crouches at his feet*.)

DIEGO

My Father, does the world to you seem changed?  
The sun so pale, the winds so chill and bleak?  
I long so for Italian olive groves,  
Our pleasant home. Oh, may we not return?  
Give up your plan that few will hear you tell.  
Why, those that listen to you, only laugh  
And call you dreamer, feather-brain and fool!

COLUMBUS

Lad, have you lost then, too, your loyal zeal?  
True, those in power gave us scant sympathy.  
Their vision measures naught beyond themselves  
And their own smug achievements. But our eyes  
Must look beyond to Him Whose Will can make  
Our visions theirs. We must not cease to hope.

DIEGO

But, Father, if the great wise God in Heaven  
Has heard your prayers, why do you suffer so?

## COLUMBUS

My boy, my life is given to this cause,  
And while I live, I hope. Nay, more, I trust!  
"What things soever that you ask," says Christ,  
"You shall receive." I dare not, will not doubt.  
My faith, my hope, shall be rewarded soon.  
(*Enter Right crowd of PEASANTS, men and  
women, with shouts and jeers.*)

## FIRST PEASANT

Where is that freak of Italy, whose tales  
Of missions far beyond the seas have been  
A nine days' wonder to the countryside?  
(*DIEGO should rise terrified and cling to his  
father.*)

## SECOND PEASANT

He is an imbecile to ask for ships  
And gold from us, when our most gracious Queen  
Is giving all to drive the Moors from Spain!

## THIRD PEASANT (*kneeling in mockery*)

Fair Knight, why not to England's shore to seek  
His Majesty, the King? He might bestow  
On you the treasures of his royal court!

#### COLUMBUS

Good sir, there did I go and humbly plead,  
But England's King is surfeited with ease,  
So far is he removed from poverty  
That he would give scant audience to one  
Who brought not flattery, nor gifts, but sought  
His aid for sufferers beyond the seas.

#### FOURTH PEASANT

Job, Solomon, Isaiah, these are dead.  
You've come to earth too late, mayhap too soon.  
There is the Holy Roman Emperor ;  
Why not approach His Royal Grace, and use  
On him the magic of your eloquence?

#### COLUMBUS

'Tis only but a play on words that one  
Can say the Holy Roman Empire lives.  
Un-Roman and unholy as it is,  
It cares not for the spiritual sword,  
The Word of God, that conquers all the earth.  
(*Choir in distance begins softly "Adore Te De-  
vote."*)

#### FIFTH PEASANT

Then, brave adventurer, here is your course!  
Go to our Holy Lord, the Pope, at Rome!

Would not the humble Spanish Borgia give  
You hearty welcome there, and ships, and gold?  
(*Music becomes louder. The PEASANTS hear it,  
and begin to depart, one by one, with loud and  
prolonged laughter, even after they leave the  
stage at Right. Lights should be lowered.*)

DIEGO (*frightened*)

Oh! Father, let us come away, and find  
Some quiet inn. These voices frighten me.  
Soon 'twill be dark.

[*Voices of PEASANTS still heard.*]

Oh! Father, do you hear?

(*Music ceases. Enter FRIAR PEREZ, in Francis-  
can habit, through Gothic portal, looking  
Right.*)

PEREZ

Methought I heard men laugh and shout.

COLUMBUS (*in reverie*)

“He shall  
Be as one mocked and spit upon . . .” How runs  
The sacred text? “And blest are ye when men  
Reville and laugh.” Then am I blest indeed!

PEREZ (*turning Left surprised*)

Good friends, may I serve you in Jesus' Name?  
The shadows lengthen, and the Angelus  
Bids me to Chapel, but your tired, wan face,  
Yes, and beside, the lad's frail wistfulness  
Arrest my sympathy. What is your quest?

COLUMBUS

My son and I, good Father, starved and spent,  
Have not a place whereon to lay our heads.  
In God's Name, let us have a crust of bread  
And shelter from the rigors of the night!  
That gracious sign

[*Points to Crucifix*]

gives us the heart to ask  
This humble alms from you.

PEREZ

My friends, I bid  
You welcome in God's Holy Name. Come in!  
Hard beds, poor fare we have, but everything  
Is yours. Your steps are bent on some great  
cause  
Of pilgrimage, I judge?

COLUMBUS

Ah! reverend sir,  
Of all whom we have met, this lad and I,  
You are the most like Him Whose cause we serve.  
As to my pilgrimage, . . . my studies prove  
That this our dwelling place, the earth, is  
round. . .

PEREZ (*in great surprise*)

You say 'tis round . . .

COLUMBUS

As round as is the ball  
Beneath yon towering cross.  
(*Points to tower of church*)

PEREZ

You dream, my man.  
The scholars teach us that the earth is flat. . . .

DIEGO (*walking over to PEREZ*)

But still my Father knows that it is round,  
And he can prove it, too.

PEREZ (*smiling*)

Well then, my man,  
What if the earth be round? What of it, then?

COLUMBUS

Why this, my Father! Day and night I think  
Of those poor souls who live in distant lands  
In pagan darkness, ignorant of Christ.

PEREZ

These are inspiring words! You are, perhaps,  
A member of some zealous Brotherhood  
That seeks for converts to enrich the Faith?

COLUMBUS

No holy vows are mine. But other sheep  
There are, not of the Fold, and these my name  
—I bear it in all pride—doth spur me on  
O'er land and sea, to find.

PEREZ (*surprised*)

Your name, you say!  
What is that name, I beg, that drives you on  
To hunt for souls?



COLUMBUS

My name is Christopher,  
My namesake bore the Savior of the world  
Upon his back, and won a martyr's crown.  
Shall I not carry Christ within my heart  
And bear Him oversea, around the world  
To His strange ignorant children far away?

PEREZ

The heathens' souls are then your object, sir?

COLUMBUS

They are my first, but not my only aim.  
I seek a newer and a shorter way  
To the East Indies. Since Byzantium's fall  
The route is closed. And last of all, one great  
High purpose! To expel the Turkish hordes  
From great Jerusalem's most holy soil  
And take Christ's tomb and all the precious land  
Made sacred by the passing of His feet

PEREZ

No one had ever worthier objects, sir.  
But what a task for one frail man, although  
Before Him lay innumerable years!  
And where are ships and men and gold to make  
Successful issue of your cherished plans?

COLUMBUS

My Father, I approach the King of Spain.  
He is a great man, and I hear, a just.  
Now, with God's help, I so will speak to him  
That he will know the logic of my dreams.  
He'll see that by my plan Hispania's wealth  
May multiply beyond his wildest hopes.

PEREZ

You have, I trust, some powerful friend at Court  
To whom you can entrust this enterprise?

COLUMBUS

Alas, my Father, I am quite unknown.

PEREZ

Perhaps I may be of some service, then,  
Poor though I am.

COLUMBUS (*to* DIEGO)

My son, what noble hearts  
These rough brown robes conceal!

(*to* PEREZ)

My grateful thanks!  
Not my deserving, but your graciousness

May win from you an introduction  
To his Most Catholic Majesty, the King.  
For did I go thus friendless to his throne  
My plans would fail.

PEREZ

But first I should, brave man,  
Be glad to have more information  
About your plans ; what proofs you have to place  
Before the sovereign's eye.

*(Angelus rings in the distance. All stand and  
pray. After the Angelus is finished, COLUM-  
BUS and DIEGO kneel before the image of the  
Madonna.)*

COLUMBUS (*pleading*)

Madonna mine,  
If thou wilt give thy powerful aid to me,  
I promise thee the ship that carries us  
Across the unknown seas shall bear thy name.  
Santa Maria, hear !

DIEGO (*walking over to PEREZ*)

But, Father, I  
Am faint ; I scarce can wait for food and drink.

PEREZ

I crave your pardon, little famished friend.  
I quite forgot your plight. I'll ring at once  
    *[rings at Monastery door]*  
For Father Guardian to take good care  
That you're supplied at once with nourishment.  
When you have supped I wish to speak again  
About your enterprise, so that I may  
Be fully cognizant of its details  
Before I seek an audience at Court.

COLUMBUS

Father, our thanks, our love, our prayers, are due  
For this, your kindly Christian act tonight.  
For all your great benevolence to us,  
May Heaven bless you!  
*(Enter through Monastery door the GUEST*  
    MASTER, a friar cowed.)

GUEST MASTER

Did you ring just now?

PEREZ

Dear reverend Father, these two weary souls  
Have need of food and drink, and when they've  
    done

I beg of you prepare a room for them  
Near to mine own; the elder one and I  
Must have an earnest talk before we sleep

GUEST MASTER

It shall be done at once as you desire.

[*Turns to COLUMBUS and DIEGO*]

Good friends, I beg of you to follow me.

(*All three enter Monastery. Lights become very low.*)

PEREZ

Would God that it were true, this dream of his!  
He is not mad, although he dreams strange  
dreams.

Perhaps those same strange dreams may turn to  
truth,

Then in dim legends, men may read his name,  
This Christopher, Christ-bearer! Future years  
May sound the glory of this wayworn man  
Who under our poor roof shall lie tonight  
And wait upon our pleasure. Gracious God,  
Thy Wisdom grant! May our good Queen give  
ear

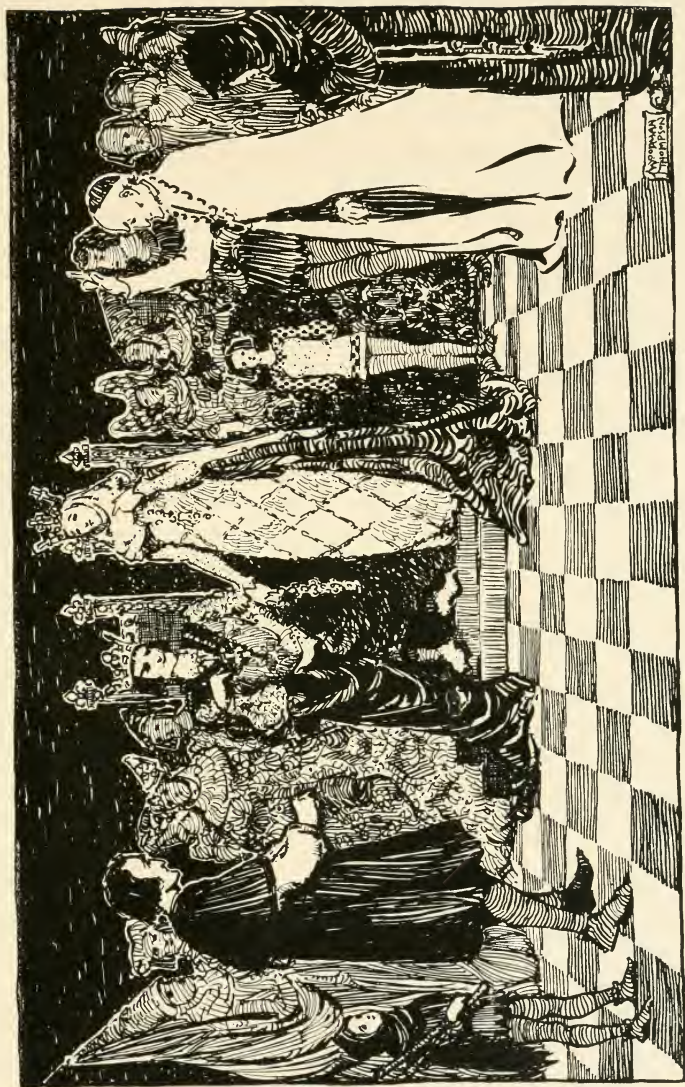
Unto his pleadings! May God's Will be done!

CURTAIN

## SECOND EPISODE

*The scene is the Spanish Court, showing a room with tapestry walls on three sides, and a tapestry ceiling, with no other decoration. The lights should not be too brilliant. In the center a throne, with two state chairs. Handel's "Largo" should begin softly, as the curtains part, then louder, as the court enters. First comes QUEEN ISABELLA, walking very majestically to the throne, her court train carried by two pages. She is followed at appropriate distances by her five COURT LADIES and a flower girl. As they approach the throne they make a very low genuflection, and take their places at each side of her throne, the one nearest her adjusting her train.*

*When the COURT LADIES have entered, they are immediately followed by a CARDINAL, with a crimson ferraiuola, accompanied by two attendants in purple. He bows to the QUEEN, and takes his place on a throne on the QUEEN's left, his attendants standing one at each side. He is followed by LUIS DE SANTANGEL, bearing an ornamented casket. He bows to the QUEEN, then to*



One moment please, my King, and you most noble Queen





*the CARDINAL, and takes his place in the throne room, on the QUEEN's right. The COURT LADIES should bow to each other, and to the COURT GENTLEMEN, when these enter.*

*There should be mute conversation among the COURT LADIES and GENTLEMEN to make a moving mass of color during the entire second episode. They should manifest their interest, approval, or disapproval of the conversations and speeches. When all have entered, the music ceases softly, and there enters at the extreme Left a HERALD, who walks slowly to the center, bows before the QUEEN, and with his back to the audience makes his announcement.*

#### HERALD

Your gracious Majesty, there waits without  
The Prior of La Rábida, who begs  
The favor of a moment's audience  
At the good pleasure of his Sovereign Queen.

#### QUEEN

At this hour! Well, his Reverence may come  
Into our presence, early as it is,  
    *[Aside to her COURT LADIES]*  
He never seeks our ear except upon  
Some matter of the highest consequence.

For him to ask for hearing at this time  
Methinks forebodes events of interest  
Unto the Court of Spain.

FIRST COURT LADY

His influence  
Upon your Highness' generous mind is strong.  
It would not be occasion for surprise  
If soon great honors, both in Church and State,  
Came to him through your Majesty. Indeed  
The whole of Spain expects it, good my Queen.

SECOND COURT LADY

I heard it said that more than once he has  
Refused to hold high offices in that  
Great order founded by Saint Francis of  
Assisi. Would the *Poverello* not  
Be proud of our good Father Perez here?

QUEEN

He never yet has asked for self. He seeks  
For others always, most unselfish man;  
Else we would scarce admit him to our throne.  
(*Enter PEREZ, Left, dressed in brown Franciscan  
habit. He bows to the QUEEN, then goes to  
the CARDINAL'S throne, kneels and kisses his  
ring and stands on CARDINAL'S right, near the  
QUEEN.*)

PEREZ

Most gracious Majesty, I give you thanks  
More than I can express for this great act  
Of sovereign favor done to me this day.

QUEEN

Had we not had experience before  
Of your most high and sacrificing soul  
We would not lightly have admitted you  
Unto our royal presence, for you have,  
No doubt, some delicate affair of State  
To urge in conference with us.

PEREZ

Most High,  
Most Catholic Queen, some time ago there came  
To me a man from Italy, who stood  
In need of vesture, food and drink and rest,  
For he was truly in distress . . .

QUEEN (*interrupting*)

To him

I beg of you, good Prior, grant whate'er  
Is needed to relieve his plight, and you  
Shall be most amply reimbursed from out  
Our royal treasury.

PEREZ

Most gracious Queen,  
Your sweet impulsiveness is far beyond  
The thanks of such an humble man as I,  
But it is not his poverty, tho' that  
Is great, that must enlist your generous aid.

QUEEN

Speak on, your Reverence, we are all ears.

PEREZ

Columbus is his name ; he has a dream  
So new, so rare, so bold ; he longs to do  
Great things for Christ—to undertake a plan  
As yet unheard, throughout the whole of time.

QUEEN

But what doth this poor friend of yours desire ?  
What are his dreams, his aims, that seem to raise  
Your high enthusiasm ?

PEREZ

Royal Queen,  
He burns with longing for great conquests—not  
Indeed for gain, nor gold, but for his God.  
In short, my gracious Queen, the man is bent  
On sailing west to India, and thus . . .

QUEEN (*surprised*)

A western route—there is but one, the east.

PEREZ

But he, my gentle Queen, intends to sail  
Due west . . .

QUEEN

Due west? he's mad. The east you mean.

PEREZ

Not so, great Sovereign, for he claims the earth  
Is round . . .

QUEEN (*greatly surprised*)

'Tis round! Your Reverence doth jest,  
Was it for this that we accorded you  
An entrance to our ear?

(*Court attendants show incredulity. CARDINAL  
shakes his head.*)

Perez

My royal Queen,  
Have patience with me—hear me to the end.  
Give but a little of your precious time  
To lay before your noble mind the proofs  
I have to show.

Queen

Truly, I spoke in haste,  
Good Prior; if you are convinced, we need  
No further proof. Your judgment we revere.  
But state his plans.

Perez

His object is three-fold;  
And first, Spain by this newest route may gain  
The wealth of India's treasure-laden plains . . .

Queen (*interested*)

Yes, yes, go on . . .

Perez

And this will raise within  
This realm a mighty host of armed men,  
Another grand Crusade to drive the Turk

Without the doors of Europe, and once more  
To take by force Christ's Holy Sepulchre,  
That has for ages stood in pagan hands,  
To our eternal shame.

QUEEN

But objects three  
You said; what is the last?

PEREZ

The best I've held  
Unto the last. 'Twill make your queenly blood  
And Catholic soul quicken as though on fire,  
He plans, this sailor, with the heart of gold,  
To colonize the Church with converts made  
From those benighted men in India's land,  
Who never yet have heard the blessed Name  
Of our good Savior.

QUEEN

A mission, then,  
Unto the heathens is his high pursuit.  
To what great Order does your friend belong?

PEREZ

Your Majesty, he is nor priest, nor monk ;  
A simple layman, one of that small band  
That in all ages of the Church are found  
To spread the faith of Christ. But for their zeal  
And their great sacrifice, there would be less  
Of triumph in the records of our Faith.

QUEEN

And you, my learned friend, do you approve  
Of all that you have told to me today?

PEREZ

With all my heart, your Majesty, or else  
I should not dare intrude upon your Grace.  
By many deep experiments I have  
Put to severest test his every plan,  
And found it to accord with reason sound.

QUEEN

And you, what would you have us do, good  
friend?



PEREZ

If to this man, your gracious Majesty  
Would offer some small aid, I promise you  
Great things for all the realms of glorious Spain,  
A shining harvest of white souls would soon  
Accrue to Holy Church. The Turk would then  
Be forced to give to us the Tomb of Christ,  
More precious far than all the earth beside.  
And last, my stately Queen, the convert tribes  
Shall crown your name with immortality  
And round your sainted memory shall shine  
A light that never was on sea or land.

QUEEN

I must confess that you have found the way  
Into my heart and purse. These noble quests  
Are such as should be given royal grant,  
What sum does this your friend desire from us  
For his great enterprise?

PEREZ (*with emotion*)

My thanks, my Queen,  
My thanks, a million times.  
(*A trumpet sounds in the distance. Enter HER-  
ALD on Right.*)

HERALD

Attention, all!

His Majesty, the King!

*(The two pages come before QUEEN, bow and go out to accompany the KING to the throne room.)*

QUEEN *(to Perez)*

He comes, the King,  
My Royal Consort. Let me ask of him  
His sage advice before I say what sum  
I shall assign unto your holy cause.

*(Music begins "Priests' March" from "Athalie" by Mendelssohn. Enter Right KING FERDINAND, his train carried by two pages. The KING stops, bows to the CARDINAL, and then sits on the throne beside the QUEEN. He is followed by his four COURT GENTLEMEN, who bow first to the QUEEN, then to the CARDINAL, and take their places. The COURT LADIES and GENTLEMEN should bow a nod of recognition as they take their places, and the movement of the COURT LADIES and GENTLEMEN should be continued without conversation.)*

KING

Good morn unto my Lady Fair. How does  
Our Queen?

QUEEN

My face reveals my heart, my Lord.  
The Prior of La Rábida is here  
To beg our intercession. One has come  
With strange and new yet weighty theories,  
And out of these he sees a wondrous wealth  
For our beloved Spain; the Tomb of Christ  
Again in Christian hands; and last, and best,  
To bring forever to the one true Faith  
A world of heathen souls that else were lost.

KING

These are but idle dreams, my lovely spouse.  
What have we royal folk to do with these?  
They are fantastic projects, and besides  
Our time is now so filled with grave affairs  
Of common weal that leisure scarce is left  
For prayer, and surely none for dreams. Come,  
come,  
My Queen, our Court has been assembled here  
This morning to discuss a weighty scheme  
To change . . .

QUEEN (*interrupting*)

But, good my Lord, one moment, please.  
The Prior of La Rábida himself  
Has lent me his august authority  
To bring this matter to your royal ear.  
The learned Father has put to the test  
The dreamer and the dream.

KING

Well, then, my love,  
We'll hear.

QUEEN

Most Reverend Father, plead again  
Unto our royal Court the cause you came  
To advocate.

PEREZ

Most High, Most Noble and  
Most Mighty Majesties! I long to have  
The eloquence of him whose magic brain  
Has wrought this thing, so that it might be  
poured  
With full sonorous tones into your ears.  
I beg you summon him to plead his own  
High cause before you.

QUEEN (*pleading*)

Let him come, my Lord,  
Well do I know our friend the Prior here  
Is wise and prudent and not wantonly  
Would he decide to seek our royal aid.

KING

So be it then. Have him appear at once  
To give account to us of this his dream.

PEREZ

He stands without the Court.

KING (*reluctantly*)

Let him but have  
A few brief instants of our time.

PEREZ

Yet hold,  
Great King, and you, good Queen, he will not be  
Attired in proper vesture. May I then  
Beg time and patience that he may appear  
In true befitting style?

QUEEN (*interrupting*)

I waive for now  
The courtesy of ceremonial dress.  
(QUEEN *bows to HERALD, who bows to throne,*  
*then goes out Right.*)

PEREZ

Oh, many thousand thanks, my Queen, for this  
Regal benevolence.  
(*Enter Right HERALD who announces SEÑOR*  
*CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. Enter COLUMBUS*  
*and DIEGO, Right, the latter carrying the rolls*  
*of maps.*)

COLUMBUS

Most mighty ones,  
Most Catholic Sovereigns, I cannot deserve  
Such condescension as you deign to show,  
Admitting to your royal presence here  
One in such rude attire.

KING (*impatiently*)

The Father here  
Has told your plans. What would you have us  
do?  
Be quick of speech, and state what proofs you  
have.

[*turning to* HERALD]

Two minutes are the most that we can grant  
To this wild dreamer here.

HERALD *bows*

COLUMBUS

Your Majesty,  
Years have I spent in study of the earth,  
In Genoa, Pavia, yea, on land  
And sea I've analyzed and searched and found  
The earth not flat, but round. And far away  
West of the unknown ocean, where the sun  
Spreads out his sunset robes of red and gold,  
Is India, a land of spice and gems,  
And from that land, by routes which we shall  
make,  
A royal ransom and a mighty host  
Will rise to liberate the Holy Land  
And the most sacred Sepulchre of Christ,  
That languishes beneath the Turkish yoke.  
Nor is this all, great King. One high resolve  
Remains, and greater than the previous two.  
It is to carry unto all the tribes  
Of that far land the blessed news of Christ.

KING

What proofs have you, what maps and charts  
    exist  
Of shores so far removed?

COLUMBUS

Behold, my King,  
Here is a drawing of that plain beyond  
The raging seas . . .

KING (*surprised*)

A map, you say? We knew  
Of no such drawing in our day at school.

COLUMBUS

Tradition was accepted, Royal King;  
But now, by logic, and research, men's minds  
Have come upon the truth that will prevail . . .

KING (*interrupting*)

How did you come across this drawing, man?



COLUMBUS

I found it, my liege Lord, while studying  
In the great Library at Genoa.

KING

What name is given to those far off parts?

COLUMBUS

St. Brendan's Land.

KING

'Tis an unusual name.  
What might it be? A saint?

COLUMBUS

A saint, indeed,  
From that famed Isle of Saints, called Ireland.  
It is now close upon a thousand years  
Since Irish sailormen, in company  
With Irish monks, discovered what they called  
A shore most beautiful, and blooming with  
A fairness like a very dream of God.  
They christened it St. Brendan's Land. The chart  
Contains the name. This is the land I wish  
To re-discover now.

QUEEN

Has nothing since  
Been heard from this far coast?

COLUMBUS

Six hundred years,  
My Queen, the Irish colony did grow  
And flourish. Then the Norsemen came, with  
him  
They called Lief Ericson, and soon the schools,  
The churches, convents, founded there did far  
Outrank in piety and learned lore  
The fruits of Faith in Iceland's chilly clime.

KING

Most interesting, is it not, my Lords  
And Gentlemen?

COURT GENTLEMAN

A strange adventurous charm  
It has, O King. We might have thought such  
things  
Could have been done so long ago by that  
Great restless Irish race, and their Norse friends  
From out the frozen seas. Their wanderings  
And fame for many deeds courageous have  
Ere this been known.

KING

But is it not a rash  
And futile thing to make attempt again  
To re-discover that which Norsemen bold  
And Irish have abandoned? Can it be  
So slight a hope is worth the cost?

COLUMBUS (*energetically*)

To save  
A single soul for Christ is worth the price,  
Though it should be half of your fair domain.  
My Liege, I have not told you that my name  
Is Christopher. He who first bore that name  
Bowed his broad shoulders to the weight of  
Christ  
And I am all unworthy of my saint  
Unless I bear the Light to darkened lands.

KING

What seamen, ships and funds will you require  
For this, your voyage of discovery?

COLUMBUS

Three ships, good King, with forty men for each,  
And also gold enough for twelve months' sail.

KING

But Spain is now so sorely tried for gold  
I cannot tax my loyal subjects more.  
The Grandees of our Council have by act  
Of their authority declared the most  
Exact and rigid saving must be made  
In all the nation's outlay, so I fear  
Your plea for help comes at a time, alas,  
Inopportune.

COLUMBUS (*pleading*)

Not surely, gracious King,  
In the same scale compare with souls the things  
Of earth, this world with next . . .

QUEEN (*interrupting*)

Let me but have  
A word, my Lord. Of this man Christopher's  
Sincerity and zeal I am assured.  
The Prior here doth stand high sponsor for  
His knowledge deep of all things needful. Grant  
That taxes press upon our kingdom hard;  
You say that now there seems no open way  
For this bold venture of our Catholic Faith.  
Let me, then, make some regal sacrifice.

Here are my jewels ; here my ring, my crown.  
They are my tribute, small, 'tis true, unto  
This holy cause of Christ.

[*very slowly*]

“The beauty of  
The Queen is all within,” says Holy Writ.  
From hence, let it be verified in me.

KING (*interrupting*)

My lovely spouse, but are you wise to part  
With all those royal stones, my gifts to thee?  
That ring, the pledge of our united love  
That shall endure until the hour of death ;  
That crown of flashing gems, ransacked of earth,  
That rests so queenly on your splendid brow ;  
That rope of lustrous pearls that fits so well  
Your lovely throat! Nay, nay, my Queen, not  
this!

Have you, I ask, so little feeling left  
For me that you can thus so slightly spare  
The cumulated tokens of my love?

QUEEN (*affectionately*)

Not that I love thee less, my royal spouse,  
[*Rises*]  
But that I love Christ more, and love for Him  
Will strengthen love of thee.

[*Turns to COLUMBUS*]

Here, Christopher,  
Transmute these baubles into ships and gold.  
Seek men, implore the blessing of our Lord,  
And beg his Navigator, Peter's aid!

CARDINAL (*rising*; QUEEN *sits*)

Hold, hold, enough! One moment, please,  
my King,  
And you, most noble Queen. I am so touched  
At all this great impulsive sacrifice  
That I could weep for joy. It is as if  
This man had blazoned splendid prophecies  
On the bare wall, and Kings had followed him.  
And yet there is no need to sacrifice  
This jewelled largess between man and wife;  
There is a happier way.

KING

Speak, Eminence.  
Your wisdom is more precious than the gems  
And your rich counsel of more worth than gold.

CARDINAL

Your Majesty, I have been deeply moved  
By this man's simple and unyielding faith,  
And as he spoke, a dream, I, too, did have.

KING

Another dream, your Eminence! Have we  
Not had enough of trial from one?

CARDINAL

I dreamed

A dream, O King, of this man Christopher,  
Of Peter's bark, the pilot to far shores.  
Can we forget that much lies in a name?  
Bethink yourself. Did not the Lord Himself  
Change Simon's name to Peter to make him  
The solid rock on which he was to rear  
His everlasting Church? So may not he,  
And that most sainted title that he bears  
Portend his office and his Christian task  
Of carrying the Gospel to those lands  
Yet undiscovered?

KING

Very true, my Lord  
And Cardinal, but you know well the cost  
Of such a missionary enterprise.  
The royal coffers are already bare  
And more taxation would bankrupt us all.

## CARDINAL

I beg your Majesty to hear me through.  
This project properly belongs to us,  
Entrusted with the rule of Holy Church.  
"Go, teach all nations," was the high command  
Of Christ to us. We are the Lord's select  
Ambassadors ; we are anointed ones  
To do his Will. Let Holy Church, then, send  
This missionary brave, this Christopher,  
By name Columbus, to the ends of earth,  
And Holy Church will gladly furnish gold  
And ships and men, else she were wholly false  
To her whole past and future destiny.

## KING

This is a plain solution. Let me now  
Applaud the wisdom of your Eminence.  
You are a councillor beyond all price.

## QUEEN

Because I am a woman, must I needs  
Withhold my jewels, feign indifference,  
Sit simperingly by, and have no part  
In this tremendous enterprise for souls?



CARDINAL

Not so, my Queen. Your soul's nobility  
And great renunciation shall exalt  
You far beyond the women of this age.  
From henceforth all the nations in the west  
Shall with one voice proclaim you blest, and place  
Your name with the immortal ones.

[*Turns to* LUIS DE SANTANGEL]

Bring here,  
Santangel, all those funds you have with you  
In yonder casket, that you guard in trust,  
We will transfer them all, and more as well,  
To this brave man whose throbbing heart conceals  
The burning zeal of great Apostle Paul.

LUIS DE SANTANGEL

(*Takes one step forward holding casket. He  
bows to throne and* CARDINAL.)

Your Eminence, I gladly acquiesce  
In your sublime decision. 'Twill place  
The funds of Holy Church at interest  
Compounded of those human souls abroad,  
Alluded to by this man Christopher.  
This casket that I hold in trust, my Lord,  
Contains in golden ducats the great sum  
Of seventeen full thousand Spanish coins.

No pious funds could better be employed.  
No customary mission venture this,  
Such as attempted by the mass of men,  
But bold, original, inspired of God.  
Most fortunate are we to be actors  
In this great deed that, while the centuries roll,  
Shall make our names resound throughout the  
world;  
For this new cause shall mark an epoch in  
The age-old history of our Catholic Faith.  
(*Bows and retires to former place.*)

COLUMBUS

Most Eminent Lord Cardinal, to you  
My generous and most noble Queen of Spain,  
Most Catholic and most mighty King, to you,  
O Reverend Father Prior, first of friends,  
Our Holy Catholic Roman Church, and all  
These realms of Spain . . . I pledge unwearied  
love  
And true obedience, and when I first  
Arrive at those uncharted lands, I shall  
Erect the blessed Cross of Christ, and plant  
Full high the standard of your Spanish power,  
And nations yet unborn shall gladly hail  
The day you lifted up this weary heart  
Of mine and made it pulse with grateful joy.

CURTAIN



Right well you may rejoice on this our day of days



## THIRD EPISODE

*("Ave Maris Stella" sung by Choir before curtain rises, with auditorium in total darkness.)*

SCENE: *Curtains part showing a vessel, partially visible. Land to one side. Tropical vegetation. Ocean visible in the faint light that gradually grows stronger. Distant voices of sailors are heard.)*

FIRST SAILOR

Land!

SECOND SAILOR

Land!

THIRD SAILOR

I see it, too!

FOURTH SAILOR

Land to the south!

FIRST SAILOR

Hurrah!

SECOND SAILOR

Viva!

THIRD SAILOR

'Tis land, 'tis land!

FOURTH SAILOR

Thank God!

FIRST SAILOR

Call to the Admiral!

SECOND SAILOR

Three cheers, three long  
And loud transporting shouts, to send the noise  
Of our exulting throats above the roar  
Of these tempestuous waves as far as Spain!

THIRD SAILOR

Hurrah, Hurrah!

FOURTH SAILOR

Three cheers! Hurrah, Hurrah!

FIRST SAILOR

Let me have place, I saw it first!

SECOND SAILOR

'Twas I!

THIRD SAILOR

Not so, I was the one who first espied  
The rolling surf that indicates dry land.

FOURTH SAILOR

But I'll be first to plant my foot thereon!

FIRST SAILOR

Be silent, fool!

SECOND SAILOR

Three cheers once more for him,  
The conquerer, Columbus, who has brought  
Us safe across the tumbling billows of  
The unknown deep.

THIRD SAILOR

Hurrah!

FOURTH SAILOR

Viva!

FIRST SAILOR

Hurrah!

SECOND SAILOR

Long live our gallant Christopher!

THIRD SAILOR

Hold!

FOURTH SAILOR

Hold!

FIRST SAILOR

Be silent, all!

PEREZ (*holding large cross*)

The Admiral doth speak.

COLUMBUS (*standing at prow of ship*)

My thanks, good men, with all my heart. Right  
well

May you rejoice on this, our day of days.  
Although quite oft my spirits pined and drooped  
When naught seemed sure but Death, and Death  
so dark



And deep and silent in the awful calm  
Of the great merciless mysterious sea,  
I felt we could not be abandoned  
By Him who stilled the waves on Galilee.  
It was His glory that I sought, not mine ;  
For Christopher of old has life again  
In me ; in faith, in hope, in all my brave  
Companions who defied the elements,  
Untamed and wild, and kept their confidence  
And trust, through God in me ; right well, I say  
Again, that you rejoice in hymns of praise,  
And may the echoes down the ages ring,  
And reach at last the great White Throne of God  
In days, fair days, that we shall never see.

It is most fitting that the Name of God  
Should be the very first of all the sounds  
That we shall utter on these new-found shores,  
Untrodden yet by any Christian foot.  
With God's Name on our lips did we begin ;  
We now complete the task and consecrate  
The work entire to Him. Advance, my men,  
And with melodious sound assail the courts  
Of yon high heaven with a sacred hymn.

*(Choir sings one or two sentences of "Te Deum.")*

*COLUMBUS steps on shore, holding sword,  
Sailors kiss the ground and otherwise manifest  
their joy.)*

## COLUMBUS

Now in the Blessed Trinity's own Name,  
And under Mary Mother's fostering care,  
I take all lands of this far western world,  
Not otherwise by valid title held,  
And them do I annex unto the crown  
Of Catholic Spain, to be administered  
By Ferdinand and Isabella. Their  
Ambassador I am, by virtue of  
Their royal grant. Whereof in witness now  
That all the world may know, we do erect  
This sacred sign and its implanting leave  
Unto the Father here, our first great friend.

*(Sailors dig hole for cross, which is erected by  
PEREZ.)*

COLUMBUS (*drawing sword*)

Let him beware who would assail by force  
Our indisputable and sovereign rights.

PEREZ

My Admiral, I little thought some few  
Short months ago, when you came to our small  
Monastic house, that this proud hour should  
spring

From our poor deed of hospitality.  
Upon what slender threads do destinies  
Of men and nations oft-times depend!  
That kindly act shall change the currents of  
The history of man. I shudder yet  
To think in retrospect what might have been  
The issue had I turned you straight away  
That fated night! Now as I lift the veil  
Of all those coming fruitful years, that bear  
Upon their freighted bosom great events,  
I dimly see my brethren of the Faith,  
Those missionaries, sacrificing self,  
Who penetrate the virgin forests, toil  
To clear their trackless woods, explore their  
depths,  
Discover streams and bays and capes, ascend  
The mountain heights, and everywhere their  
feet  
Shall tread, a mission chapel they'll erect,  
A prayer-house! The Dwelling-Place of God!  
They'll call it after those heroic men  
And women, the fast friends of Christ, until  
The surface of the land is dotted o'er,  
A long and stately litany of Saints,  
To render thanks eternal for this day,  
And summon every traveller to note  
Their impress, deep, indelible, upon  
This land now dedicated all to Christ.

## SAILORS

Long live the King!

Long live the Queen!

Long live

Columbus, too!

## COLUMBUS

May this strange shore, which we  
Have touched today, produce a race of men  
Whose love of justice, liberty and truth  
Shall be more strong than death! May they pre-  
serve

Undimmed the torch of Christianity,  
And if the aged world of Europe should  
At some far distant time, which God forbid,  
Depart from out the fold of that true Church,  
Whose burning thirst for souls hath sent me here,  
May this new land arise at once with ships,  
And gold and men, to stretch her grateful arm,  
Impelled by ancient apostolic zeal,  
Across the brine in friendship's sacred grasp,  
To make return in kind for this day's deed,  
To stem the tide of infidelity,  
To win new converts to the Ark of Christ,  
And keep aflame the light of Catholic Faith!

*(Choir sings one sentence of the "Salve Regina"  
as CURTAIN falls.)*

## OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

Father Coakley has added a new and thrilling drama to the ensemble of historical spectacles, correct in its conventions, entrancing with its æsthetic atmosphere of the fifteenth century's royal courts, dazzling in its array of costumes, sonorous with the stately and measured cadences of its actors. (*Pittsburgh Gazette-Times*)

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The Columbus Pageant is a thing of beauty. The unusual grandeur of the three episodes made the spectacle one long to be remembered by those who witnessed it. The costumes and stage settings run through the whole gamut of lovely colors. Doctor Coakley's lines are noble and dignified, and they move with a rhythm and a swing that give them a sonorous sound as they trip lightly on the tongue. (*Pittsburgh Press*)

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The Columbus Pageant is an elaborate production of the splendor of Medieval Spain. The large number of characters in colorful costumes mingle to form a striking, almost dazzling, treat for the eye, while the reading of the dignified lines by the players was done with a restraint rarely to be found. (*Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph*)

The hand of a master is in evidence everywhere. There are deft and subtle touches of Spanish color and atmosphere that breathe the aroma of the Dons of the Fifteenth Century when religion played so important a part in the life of the Middle Ages. For sheer splendor the Court scene, a glorious medieval hall, tapestry hung, exquisite in its simplicity, has not been surpassed anywhere in Pittsburgh on any stage. (*Pittsburgh Observer*)

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The success of the affair was assured by the beauty and dignity of the lines, and the opportunity for masses of the rich, sometimes almost barbaric, color of Spain, which had not yet emerged from the Medieval period of history. (*Pittsburgh Dispatch*)

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Pittsburgh has seen much Pageantry recently, but none of it has been more grandly conceived, or more nobly expressed than this Columbus Pageant. The moment the curtains part, one realizes he is attending no mere amateur performance. (*Pittsburgh Catholic*)



















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Grantville, Pa.  
May-June 1985  
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